

P O R T R A I T S

O F

HUMAN CHARACTERS,

W I T H

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS.

Extracted from a late Author,

AND

ADDRESSED TO ALL ORDERS OF MEN;

By the Rev^d. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.*Veluti in Speculo.*

If the Cap fits, put it on.

M A C C L E S F I E L D :

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MDCCXC.

THE following Characters are drawn by a very pious and masterly pen, and appear calculated to call the attention of mankind inward, and to do them good. With this view they are selected from the larger works of the Author, and presented to the Reader in this new form, by his affectionate humble servant,

Macclesfield,
August 25th. 1790.

The Editor.





P O R T R A I T S

OF HUMAN CHARACTERS, &c.

1. *Character of Calidus.*

CALIDUS has traded above thirty years in the the greatest city of the kingdom; and has been so many years constantly increasing his trade and his fortune. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of business; and though he eats and drinks very heartily, yet every meal seems to be in a hurry, and he would say grace if he had time. *Calidus* ends every day at the tavern; but he has not leisure to be there till near nine o'clock. He is always forced to drink a good hearty glass, to drive thoughts of business out of his head, and make his spirits drowsy enough for sleep. He does business all the time he is rising, and has settled several matters before he can get to his counting house. His prayers are a short ejaculation or two, which he never misses in stormy, tempestuous weather, because he has always something or other

at sea. *Calidus* will tell you with great pleasure, that he has been in this hurry for many years, and that it must have killed him long ago, but that it has been a rule with him, to get out of the town every Saturday, and make the Sunday a day of quiet and good refreshment in the country.

He is now so rich, that he would leave off his business, and amuse his old age with building and furnishing a fine house in the country; but that he is afraid he shall grow melancholy, if he was to quit his business. He will tell you with great gravity, that it is a dangerous thing for a man that has been used to get money, ever to leave it off. If thoughts of religion happen at any time to steal into his head, *Calidus* contents himself with thinking, that he never was a friend to heretics and infidels; that he has always been civil to the minister of the parish, and very often given something to the charity-school.

REFLECTIONS.

This way of life is at such a distance from all the doctrine and discipline of christianity, that no one can live in it through ignorance or frailty. *Calidus* can no more imagine, that *he is born again of the spirit*; that *he is in Christ a new creature*; that *he lives here a stranger and pilgrim, setting his affections upon things above, and laying up treasures in heaven*; he can no more imagine this, than he can think that he has been all his life an apostle, working miracles, and preaching the gospel.

Character

II. Character of Mundanus.

MUNDANUS is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehension. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in business. Every part of trade and business that has fallen in his way, has had some improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing any thing well, to its greatest height. *Mundanus* aims at the greatest perfection in every thing. The soundness and strength of his mind, and his just way of thinking upon things, makes him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of trade, building, or improving land or manufactures. The clearness and strength of his understanding, which he is constantly improving, by continual exercise in these matters, by often digesting his thoughts in writing, and trying every thing every way, has rendered him a great master of most concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mundanus* gone on, increasing his knowledge and judgment, as fast as his years came upon him.

The one only thing, which has not fallen under his improvement, nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his devotion: This is just in the same poor state it was, when he was only six years of age; and the old man prays now, in that little form of words, which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning.

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This *Mundanus*, that hardly ever saw the poorest utensil, or ever took the meanest trifle into his hand, without considering how it might be made, or used to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner, as when he was a child; without ever considering how much better, or oftener he might pray; without considering how improveable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is, that our prayers should be enlarged, varied, and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives.

If *Mundanus* sees a book of devotion, he passes it by, as he does a spelling-book, because he remembers that he learned to pray so many years ago under his mother, when he learnt to spell.

REFLECTIONS.

Now how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in every thing, but that which is the whole wisdom of man?

And how miserably do many people, more or less, imitate this conduct?

III. *Character of Negotius.*

NEGOTIUS is a temperate, honest man. He served his time under a master of great trade, but has by his own management made it a more considerable business than ever it was before. For thirty years last past, he has wrote fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy in corresponding with all parts of Europe. The general good of trade seems to *Negotius* to be the general good of life; whomsoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns, either in church or state, is admired, commended, or condemned, with some regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him; so he often lets it go in various kinds of expence and generosity, and sometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution. If a purse is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a plate for a horse race, or to redeem a prisoner out of jail, you are always sure of having something from him.

He has given a fine ring of bells to a church in the country; and there is much expectation, that he will some time or other make a more beautiful front to the market-house, than has yet been seen in any place. For it is the generous spirit of *Negotius* to do nothing in a mean way.

If you ask what it is, that has secured *Negotius* from all scandalous vices, it is the same thing that has kept him from all strictness of devotion, it is his great

business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed, to suffer him to fall either into any courses of rakery, or to feel the necessity of an inward solid piety.

For this reason he hears of the pleasures of debauchery, and the pleasures of piety, with the same indifference; and has no more desire of living in the one than in the other, because neither of them consist with that turn of mind, and multiplicity of business, which are his happiness.

If *Negotius* was asked, what it is which he drives at in life? he would be as much at a loss for an answer, as if he was asked, what any other person is thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head, which are the motives of his actions; yet he cannot tell you of any one general end of life, that he has chosen with deliberation, as being truly worthy of all his labours and pains.

He has several confused notions in his head, which have been a long time there; such as these, *viz.* That it is something great to have more business than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands than an hundred of the same profession; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give *Negotius* the greatest life and spirits, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did.

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The generality of people, when they think of happiness, think upon *Negotius*, in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet; sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous, and charitable.

REFLECTIONS.

Let it now be supposed, that this same *Negotius* was a painful, laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank nor debauched; but was sober and regular in his business. Let it be supposed that he grew old in this course of trading; and that the end and design of all this labour, and care, and application to business, was only this that he might die possessed of more than an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs, and as many great coats.

Let it be supposed, that the sober part of the world say of him when he is dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough master of business, and had acquired an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs when he died.

Now if this was really the case, I believe it would be readily granted, that a life of such business was as poor and ridiculous, as any that can be invented: But it would puzzle any one to shew, that a man that has spent all his time and thoughts in business and hurry, that he might die, as it is said, worth an hundred thousand pounds, is any whit wiser than he, who has taken the same pains to have as many pair of boots and spurs when he leaves the world.

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For if the temper and state of our souls be our whole state; if the only end of life be to die as free from sin, and as exalted in virtue as we can; if naked as we came, so naked are we to return, and to stand a trial before Christ, and his holy angels, for everlasting happiness or misery; what can it possibly signify, what a man had, or had not, in this world? What can it signify what you call those things which a man has left behind him; whether you call them his, or any one's else; whether you call them trees or fields, or birds and feathers; whether you call them an hundred thousand pounds, or an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs; I say, call them; for the things signify no more to him than the names.

Now it is easy to see the folly of a life thus spent, to furnish a man with such a number of boots and spurs. But yet there needs no better faculty of seeing, no finer understanding, to see the folly of a life spent in making a man a possessor of ten towns before he dies.

For if when he has got all his towns, or all his boots, his soul is to go to his own place amongst separate spirits, and his body be laid by in a coffin, till the last trumpet calls him to judgment; where the enquiry will be, how humbly, how devoutly, how purely, how meekly, how piously, how charitably, how heavenly we have spoke, thought, and acted, whilst we were in the body; how can we say, that he who has wore out his life in raising an hundred thousand pounds, has acted wiser for himself, than he
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who has had the same care to procure an hundred thousand of any thing else?

But farther: Let it now be supposed, that *Negotius*, when he first entered into business, happening to read the Gospel with attention, and eyes open, found that he had a much greater business upon his hands, than that to which he had served an apprenticeship: that there were things which belong to man, of much more importance than all that our eyes can see; so glorious, as to deserve all our thoughts; so dangerous, as to need all our care; and so certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer.

Let it be supposed, that from reading this book, he had discovered that his soul was more to him than his body; that it was better to grow in the virtues of the soul, than to have a large body, or a full purse; that it was better to be fit for heaven, than to have variety of fine houses upon the earth; that it was better to secure an everlasting happiness, than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep; better live in habits of humility, piety, devotion, charity, and self denial, than to die unprepared for judgment; better to be most like our Saviour, or some eminent saint, than to excel all the tradesmen in the world, in business and bulk of fortune.

Let it be supposed that *Negotius* believing these things to be true, entirely devoted himself to God at his first setting out in the world, resolving to pursue his business no farther than was consistent with great devotion, humility, and self-denial; and for no other
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ends, but to provide himself with a sober subsistence, and to do all the good that he could, to the souls and bodies of his fellow creatures.

Let it therefore be supposed, that instead of the continual hurry of business, he was frequent in his retirements, and a strict observer of all the hours of prayer: that instead of restless desires after more riches, his soul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, constantly watching against worldly tempers, and always aspiring after divine grace; that instead of worldly cares and contrivances, he was busy in fortifying his soul against all approaches of sin; that instead of costly shew, and expensive generosity of a splendid life, he loved and exercised all instances of humility and lowliness; that instead of great treats and full tables, his house only furnished a sober refreshment to those that wanted it.

Let it be supposed, that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy: that his piety made him thankful to God in all crosses and disappointments: that his charity kept him from being rich, by a continual distribution to all objects of compassion.

Now had this been the christian spirit of *Negotius*, can any one say, that he had lost the true joy and happiness of life, by thus conforming to the spirit, and living up to the hopes of the gospel?

Can it be said, that a life made exemplary by such virtues as these, which keep heaven always in our sight

fight, which both delight and exalt the soul here, and prepare it for the presence of God hereafter, must be poor and dull, if compared to that of heaping up riches, which can neither stay with us, nor we with them?

IV. *Character of Penitens.*

PENITENS was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings, but died in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbours came one evening to see him; at which time he spake thus to them:

I see, says he, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you now have about me. You think how melancholy a case it is, to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate.

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These things are now sunk into such mere nothings that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcase to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally separated from all light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of every thing else?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly state, which is too wise and busy to be at leisure for these reflections?

When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich; but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity; not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this?

For what is there miserable or dreadful in death, but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does any thing signify to him, but the state he is then in?

Our poor friend Lepidus died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a feast; do you think it is
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now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feasts, and business, and pleasures, and enjoyments, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else; but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness; and the soul, that is separated from the body, no more laments the loss of business, than the losing of a feast.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more bargains, or stood a little longer behind a counter?

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

If good angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me, that I was dying on a poor bed in a garret?

And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a bed of state?

When you are as near death as I am, you will know, that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you, than whether you die in a poor or stately apartment.

The greatness of those things which follow death, makes all that goes before it sink into nothing.

Now that judgment is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness or misery is come so near me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have no more to do with my happiness, than the cloaths that I wore before I could speak.

But, my friends, how am I surprized, that I have not always had these thoughts? for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life?

What a strange thing it is, that a little health, or the poor business of a shop, should keep us so senseless of these great things, that are coming so fast upon us!

Just as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with myself, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time surprized with a summons to the other world; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures, these at suits at law, those at gaming tables, some on the road, others at their own fire sides, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frightened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions

victions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

Oh, my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at the last.

And take this along with you; that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these apprehensions.

Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended.

You, perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self condemnation at the approach of death.

But alas! what a poor thing is it, to have lived only free from murder, theft, and adultery, which is all that I can say of myself.

You know, indeed, that I have never been reckoned a sot; but you are at the same time witnesses, and have been frequent companions of my intemperance, sensuality, and great indulgence. And if I am now going to a judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but good works, I may well be con-

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cerned, that though I am no sot, yet I have no christian sobriety to plead for me.

It is true, I have lived in the communion of the church, and generally frequented its worship and service on sundays, when I was neither too idle, or not otherwise disposed of by my business and pleasures. But then, my conformity to the public worship has been rather a thing of course, than any real intention of doing that, which the service of the church supposes; had it not been so, I had been oftener at church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now surprizes me above all wonder, is this; that I never had so much as a general intention of living up to the piety of the gospel. This never so much as entered into my head, or my heart. I never once in my life considered, whether I was living as the laws of religion direct, or whether my way of life was such, as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

And can it be thought, that I have kept the gospel terms of salvation, without ever so much as intending in any serious and deliberate manner either to know them, or keep them? Can it be thought, that I have pleased God with such a life as he requires, though I have lived without ever considering what he requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be, if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thought about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made? In

In the business of life I have used prudence and reflection, I have done every thing by rules and methods. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail, and others succeed in any business. I have taken no step in trade but with great care and caution, considering every advantage or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to religion? What is the reason that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of rules and methods, and diligence in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of piety?

Do you think any thing can astonish, and confound a dying man like this? what pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays this folly to his charge; when it shall shew him how regular, exact, and wise he has been in small matters, that are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such eternal moment, as no heart can sufficiently conceive them!

Had I only my frailties and imperfections to lament at this time, I should lie here humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But alas! how can I call a general disregard, and a thorough neglect of all re-

religious improvement, a frailty or imperfection, when it was as much in my power to have been exact, and careful, and diligent in a course of piety, as in the business of my trade?

I could have called in as many helps, have practised as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my shop, had I but so intended and desired it.

Oh my friends, a careless life, unconcerned and unattentive to the duties of religion, is so without all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, such a shame to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment, than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in, to reflect upon it

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth stopped by a convulsion, which never suffered him to speak any more. He lay convulsed about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghost.

REFLECTIONS.

Now if every reader would imagine this *Penitens* to have been some particular acquaintance or relation of his, and fancy that he saw and heard all that is here described; that he stood by his bed-side when his poor friend lay in such distress and agony, lamenting the folly of his past life; it would, in all probability, teach him such wisdom as never entered into his heart before. If to this he should consider, how often he himself might have been surprized in the same state

state of negligence, and made an example to the rest of the world; this double reflection, both upon the distress of his friend, and the goodness of that God who had preserved him from it, would in all likelihood soften his heart into holy tempers, and make him turn the remainder of his life into a regular course of piety.

V. Character of Julius.

Julius is very fearful of missing prayers; all the parish supposes *Julius* to be sick, if he is not at church. But if you was to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by humour or chance? why he is the companion of the silliest people in their most silly pleasures? why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diversion? If you was to ask him why there is no amusement too trifling to please him? why he is busy at all balls and assemblies? why he gives himself up to an idle gossiping conversation? why he lives in foolish friendships and fondness for particular persons, that neither want nor deserve any particular kindness? why he allows himself in foolish hatreds and resentments against particular persons, without considering that he is to love every body as himself? If you ask him why he never puts his conversation, his time, and fortune, under the rules of religion; *Julius* has no more to say for himself, than the most disorderly person. For the whole tenor of

scripture lies as directly against such a life, as against debauchery and intemperance: He that lives in such a course of idleness and folly, lives no more according to the religion of Jesus Christ, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man was to tell *Julius* that there was no occasion for so much constancy at prayers, and that he might without any harm to himself, neglect the service of the church, as the generality of people do, *Julius* would think such a one to be no christian, and that he ought to avoid his company. But if a person only tells him, he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himself as others do, that he may spend his time and money as people of fashion do, that he may conform to the follies and frailties of the generality, and gratify his tempers and passions as most people do; *Julius* never suspects that man to want a christian spirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.

And yet if *Julius* was to read all the New Testament from the beginning to the end, he would find his course of life condemned in every page of it.

VI. Character of *Flatus*.

FLATUS is rich and in health, yet always uneasy, and always searching after happiness. Every time you visit him, you find some new project in his head, he is eager upon it as something that is more

worth

worth his while, and will do more for him, than any thing that is already past. Every new thing so seizes him, that if you was to take him from it, he would think himself quite undone. His sanguine temper, and strong passions, promise him so much happiness in every thing, that he is always cheated, and is satisfied with nothing.

At his first setting out in life, fine cloaths were his delight, his enquiry was only after the best taylors and peruke-makers, and he had no thoughts of excelling in any thing but dress. He spared no expence, but carried every nicety to its greatest height. But this happiness not answering his expectations, he left off his brocades, put on a plain coat, railed at fops and beaus, and gave himself up to gaming with great eagerness.

This new pleasure satisfied him for some time, he envied no other way of life. But being by the fate of play drawn into a duel, where he narrowly escaped death, he left off the dice, and sought for happiness no longer amongst the gamesters.

The next thing that seized his wandering imagination, was the diversions of the town; and for more than a twelvemonth, you heard him talk of nothing, but ladies, drawing-rooms, birth-nights, plays, balls, and assemblies. But growing sick of these, he had recourse to hard drinking. Here he had many a merry night, and met with stronger joys than any he had felt before. Here he had thoughts of setting up his staff, and looking out no farther; but unluckily

falling into a fever, he grew angry at all strong liquors, and took his leave of the happiness of being drunk.

The next attempt after happiness, carried him into the field; for two or three years, nothing was so happy as hunting; he entered upon it with all his soul, and leaped more hedges and ditches than ever had been known in so short a time. You never saw him but in a green coat; he was the envy of all that blow the horn, and always spoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you met him at home in a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertained with the surprizing accidents of the last noble chase. No sooner had *Flatus* outdone all the world in the breed and education of his dogs, built new kennels, new stables, and bought a new hunting seat, but he immediately got sight of another happiness, hated the senseless noise and hurry of hunting, gave away his dogs, and was for sometime after deep in the pleasures of building.

Now he invents new kinds of dove-cotes, and has such contrivances in his barns and stables, as were never seen before; he wonders at the dulness of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of architecture, and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tells his friends, that he never was so delighted in any thing in his life; that he has more happiness amongst his brick and mortar, than ever he had at court; and he is contriving how to have some little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

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The next year he leaves his house unfinished, complains to every body of masons and carpenters, and devotes himself wholly to the happiness of riding about. After this, you can never see him but on horseback, and so highly delighted with this new way of life, that he would tell you, give him but his horse and a clean country to ride in, and you might take all the rest to yourself. A variety of new saddles and bridles, and a great change of horses, added much to the pleasures of this new way of life. But, however, having, after some time, tired both himself and his horses, the happiest thing he could think of next, was to go abroad and visit foreign countries; and there indeed happiness exceeded his imagination, and he was only uneasy that he had begun so fine a life no sooner. The next month he returned home, unable to bear any longer the impertinence of foreigners.

After this, he was a great student for one whole year; he was up early and late at his Italian grammar, that he might have the happiness of understanding the opera, whenever he should hear one, and not be like those unreasonable people, that are pleased with they know not what.

Flatus is very ill-natured, or otherwise, just as his affairs happen to be when you visit him; if you find him when some project is almost wore out, you will find a peevish ill-bred man; but if you had seen him just as he entered upon his riding regimen, or began to excel in sounding of the horn, you had been saluted with great civility.

Flatus

Flatus is now at a full stand, and is doing what he never did in his life before, he is reasoning and reflecting with himself. He looses several days, in considering which of his cast-off ways of life he should try again.

But here a new project comes in to his relief. He is now living upon herbs, and running about the country, to get himself into as good wind as any running footman in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS.

If people were to divide their lives into particular stages, and ask themselves what they were pursuing, or what it was which they had chiefly in view, when they were twenty years old, what at twenty five, what at thirty, what at forty, what at fifty, and so on, till they were brought to their last bed; numbers of people will find, that they had liked and disliked, and pursued as many different appearances of happiness, as are to be seen in the life of *Flatus*.

And thus it must necessarily be, more or less, with all those who propose any other happiness, than that which arises from a strict and regular piety.

But, secondly, let it be granted, that the generality of people are not of such restless, fickle tempers as *Flatus*; the difference then is only this, *Flatus* is continually changing and trying something new, but others are content with some one state; they do not leave gaming, and then fall to hunting. But they have so much steadiness in their tempers, that some seek

seek after no other happiness, but that of heaping up riches; others grow old in the sports of the field; others are content to drink themselves to death, without the least enquiry after any other happiness.

Now is there any thing more happy or reasonable, in such a life as this, than in the life of *Flatus*? Is it not as great and desirable, as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another, as to be nothing else but a gatherer of money, a hunter, a gamester, or a drunkard, all your life?

VII. Character of *Succus*.

Would you know what a happiness it is, to be governed by the wisdom of religion, and be devoted to the joys and hopes of a pious life, look at the poor condition of *Succus*, whose greatest happiness is a good night's rest in bed, and a good meal when he is up. When he talks of happiness, it is always in such expressions, as shew you, that he has only his bed and his dinner in his thoughts.

This regard to his meals and repose, makes *Succus* order all the rest of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no business that may hurry his spirits, or break in upon his hours of eating and rest. If he reads, it shall only be for half an hour, because that is sufficient to amuse the spirits; and he will read something that may make him laugh, as rendering the body fitter for its food and rest. Or if he has at any time a mind to indulge a grave thought, he al-
ways

ways has recourse to a useful treatise upon the ancient cookery. *Succus* is an enemy to all party matters, having made it an observation, that there is as good eating amongst the Whigs as the Tories.

He talks coolly and moderately upon all subjects, and is as fearful of falling into a passion, as of catching cold; being very positive, that they are both equally injurious to the stomach. If ever you see him more hot than ordinary, it is upon some provoking occasion, when the dispute about cookery runs very high, or in the defence of some beloved dish, which has often made him happy. But he has been so long upon these subjects, is so well acquainted with all that can be said on both sides, and has so often answered all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus is very loyal, and as soon as ever he likes any wine, he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unless he should live to see a proclamation against eating of pheasants eggs.

All the hours that are not devoted either to repose, or nourishment, are looked upon by *Succus* as waste or spare time. For this reason he lodges near a coffee-house and a tavern, that when he rises in the morning he may be near the news, and when he parts at night, he may not have far to bed. In the morning you always see him in the same place in the coffee-room, and if he seems more attentively engaged than ordinary, it is because some criminal is broke

broke out of newgate, or some lady was robbed last night, but they cannot tell where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to settle the matter with the barber's boy, that comes to shave him.

The next waste time that lies upon his hands, is from dinner to supper. And if melancholy thoughts ever come into his head, it is at this time, when he is often left to himself for an hour or more, and that after the greatest pleasure he knows is just over. He is afraid to sleep, because he has heard it is not healthful at that time, so that he is forced to refuse so welcome a guest.

But here he is soon relieved by a settled method of playing at cards, till it is time to think of some little nice matter for supper.

After this, *Succus* takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the English constitution, and praises that minister the most, who keeps the best table.

On a Sunday night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the town rakes; and the bitterest thing that he says against them, is this, that he verily believes, some of them are so abandoned as not to have a regular meal, or a sound night's sleep in a week.

At eleven *Succus* bids all good night, and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning.

If you wasto live with *Succus* for a twelve-month, this is all that you would see in his life, except a few curses and oaths that he uses as occasion offers.

REFLECTIONS.

Who can help blessing God for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory, when he sees what variety of folly they sink into, who live without it? Who would not heartily engage in all the labours and exercises of a pious life, be stedfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord; when he sees what dull sensuality, what poor views, what gross enjoyments they are left to, who seek for happiness in other ways?

So that whether we consider the greatness of religion, or the littleness of all other things, and the meanness of all other enjoyments, there is nothing to be found in the whole nature of things for a thoughtful mind to rest upon, but a happiness in the hopes of religion.

VIII. *Character of Fulvius.*

FULVIUS has had a learned education, and taken his degrees in the university, he came from thence, that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him, nor enters into any business, because he thinks that every employment or business, calls people to the careful performance and just discharge of its several duties. When he is grave, he will tell you, that he did not enter into holy orders, because he looked upon it to be a state that requires great holiness of life, and that it does not suit his temper to be so good. He will tell you

you that he never intends to marry, because he cannot oblige himself to that regularity of life, and good behaviour, which he takes to be the duty of those that are at the head of a family. He refused to be godfather to his nephew, because he will have no trust of any kind to answer for.

Fulvius thinks that he is conscientious in this conduct, and is therefore content with the most idle, impertinent, and careless life.

He has no religion, no devotion, no pretences to piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well, because he is neither a priest, nor a father, nor a guardian, nor has any employment or family to look after.

But, *Fulvius*, you are a rational creature, and as such are as much obliged to live according to reason and order, as a priest is obliged to attend at the altar, or a guardian to be faithful to his trust; if you live contrary to reason, you do not commit a small crime, you do not break a small trust; but you break the law of your nature, you rebel against God who gave you that nature, and put yourself amongst those whom the God of reason and order will punish as apostates and deserters.

Though you have no employment, yet as you are baptized into the profession of Christ's religion, you are as much obliged to live according to the holiness of the christian spirit, and perform all the promises made at your baptism, as any man is obliged to be honest and faithful in his calling. If you abuse
this

this great calling, you are not false in a small matter, but you abuse the precious blood of Christ; you crucify the Son of God afresh; you neglect the highest instances of divine goodness; you disgrace the church of God; you blemish the body of Christ; you abuse the means of grace, and the promises of glory; and it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

REFLECTIONS.

It is great folly, for any one to think himself at liberty to live as he pleases, because he is not in such a state of life as some others are: for if there is any thing dreadful in the abuse of any trust; if there is any thing to be feared for the neglect of any calling, there is nothing more to be feared than the wrong use of our reason, nor any thing more to be dreaded, than the neglect of our christian calling; which is not to serve the little uses of a short life, but to redeem souls unto God, to fill heaven with saints, and finish a kingdom of eternal glory unto God.

No man therefore must think himself excused from the exactness of piety and morality, because he has chosen to be idle, and independent in the world; for the necessities of a reasonable and a holy life, are not founded in the several conditions and employments of this life, but in the immutable nature of God, and the nature of man. A man is not to be reasonable and holy, because he is a priest, or a father of a family; but he is to be a pious priest, and a good

good father, because piety and goodness are the laws of human nature. Could any man please God, without living according to reason and order, there would be nothing displeasing to God in an idle priest, or a reprobate father. He therefore that abuses his reason, is like him that abuses the priesthood; and he that neglects the holiness of the christian life, is as the man that disregards the most important trust.

IX. Character of Octavius.

OCTAVIUS is a learned, ingenious man, well versed in most parts of literature, and no stranger to any kingdom in Europe. The other day, being just recovered from a lingering fever, he took upon him to talk thus to his friends:

My glass, says he, is almost run out; and your eyes see how many marks of age and death I bear about me: but I plainly feel myself sinking away faster than any standers by may imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning.

The attention of his friends was much raised by such a declaration, expecting to hear something truly excellent from so learned a man, who had but a year longer to live; when *Octavius* proceeded in this manner: For these reasons, says he, my friends, I have left off all taverns, the wine of those places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature.

I must now be nice in what I drink; I cannot pretend to do, as I have done; and therefore am resolved to furnish my own cellar with a little of the very best; though it cost me ever so much.

I must also tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be wise in many other respects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices.

You know how much I have liked a large acquaintance; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four cheerful, diverting companions, is all that I now desire; because I find, that in my present infirmities, if I am left alone, or to grave company, I am not so easy to myself.

A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a nurse, who closed his eyes before his fresh parcel of wine came in.

REFLECTIONS.

Young *Eugenius*, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God.

I never, says *Eugenius*, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion, as when I saw how poorly and meanly the learned *Octavius* was to leave the world, through the want of it.

How often had I envied his great learning, his skill in languages, his knowledge of antiquity, his address, and fine manner of expressing himself upon all subjects! But when I saw how poorly it all ended

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ed, what was to be the last year of such a life, and how foolishly the master of all these accomplishments was then forced to talk, for want of being acquainted with the joys and expectations of piety; I was thoroughly convinced, that there was nothing to be envied or desired, but a life of true piety; nor any thing so poor and comfortless, as a death without it.

X. *Character of Classicus.*

CLASSICUS is a man of learning, and well versed in all the best authors of antiquity. He has read them so much, that he has entered into their spirit, and can very ingeniously imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can express himself in their language. He is so great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights of a young scholar, he never fails to advise him concerning his studies.

Classicus tells his young man, he must not think that he has done enough, when he has only learnt languages; but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of taste and judgment.

How wise might *Classicus* have been, and how much good might he have done in the world, if he

had but thought as justly of devotion, as he does of learning.

He never, indeed, says any thing shocking or offensive about devotion, because he never thinks, or talks about it. It suffers nothing from him, but neglect and disregard.

The two testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his books, but that they are both to be had in greek.

Classicus thinks that he sufficiently shews his regard for the holy scriptures, when he tells you, that he has no other books of piety besides them.

It is very well, *Classicus*, that you prefer the bible to all other books of piety: he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety, besides the bible, because it is the best; how comes it, *Classicus*, that you do not content yourself with one of the best books amongst the Greeks and Romans? How comes it that you are so greedy and eager after all of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a necessary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are so earnest, so laborious, so expensive of your time and money to restore broken periods, and scraps of the ancients?

How comes it that you read so many commentators upon Cicero, Horace, and Homer, and not one upon the gospel? How comes it that your love of Cicero, and Ovid, makes you love to read an author

thor that writes like them; and yet your esteem for the gospel gives you no desire, nay, prevents your reading such books, as breathe the very spirit of the gospel?

How comes it that you tell your young scholar, he must not content himself with barely understanding his authors, but must be continually reading them all, as the only means of entering into their spirit, and forming his own judgment according to them?

Why then must the bible lie alone in your study? Is not the spirit of the saints, the piety of the holy followers of Jesus Christ, as good and necessary a means of entering into the spirit and taste of the gospel, as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the spirit of antiquity?

Is the spirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of poets and orators? And is not the spirit of devotion to be got in the same way, by frequent reading the holy thoughts, and pious strains of devout men?

Is your young poet to search after every line, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination? And is it not as reasonable for him, who desires to improve in the divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to search after every strain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his soul?

Do you advise your orator to translate the best orations, to commit much of them to the memory, to be frequently exercising his talents in this man-

ner, that habits of thinking and speaking justly may be formed in his mind? And is there not the same benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion? Should not a man use them in the same way, that habits of devotion, and aspiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well formed in his soul?

Now the reason why *Classicus* does not think and judge thus reasonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a form of words. It never in his life entered into his head, to think of devotion as a state of the heart, as an improveable talent of the mind, as a temper that is to grow and increase like our reason and judgment, and to be formed in us by such a regular diligent use of proper means, as are necessary to form any other wise habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life with the bare letter of prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the spirit of heathen poets and orators.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of scholars are more or less chargeable with this excessive folly; so negligent of improving their devotion, and so desirous of other poor accomplishments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an epigram in the turn of Martial, than to live, and think, and pray to God, in the spirit of St. Austin.

And yet, to correct this temper, and fill a man with a quite contrary spirit, there seems to be no more required, than the bare belief of the truth of christianity.

And

And if you was to ask *Classicus*, or any man of business or learning, whether piety is not the highest perfection of man, or devotion the greatest attainment in the world, they must both be forced to answer in the affirmative, or else give up the truth of the gospel.

For to set any accomplishment against devotion, or to think any thing, or all things in the world, bears any proportion to its excellency; is the same absurdity in a christian, as it would be in a philosopher to prefer a meal's meat, to the greatest improvement in knowledge.

For as philosophy professes purely the search and enquiry after knowledge; so christianity supposes, intends, desires, and aims at nothing else, but the raising fallen man to a divine life, to such habits of holiness, such degrees of devotion, as may fit him to enter amongst the holy inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

He that does not believe this of christianity, may be reckoned an infidel; and he that believes thus much, has faith enough to give him a right judgment of the value of things, to support him in a sound mind, and enable him to conquer all the temptations which the world shall lay in his way.



XI. Character of *Cæcus*.

CÆCUS is a rich man, of good birth, and very fine parts. He is fond of dress, curious in the smallest matters that can add any ornament to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his inferiors, is very full of every thing that he says or does, and never imagines it possible for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of his understanding, as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes every thing in his house, his habit, and his equipage, as often as any thing more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so.

There is nothing so odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quick-sighted, that he discovers in almost every body some strokes of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceedingly fond of humble and modest persons. Humility, says he, is so amiable a quality, that it forces our esteem wherever we meet with it. There is no possibility of despising the meanest person that has it, or of esteeming the greatest man that wants it.

Cæcus no more suspects himself to be proud, than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enraged at pride,

It is very true, *Cecus*, you speak sincerely when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no hypocrite, you speak the true sentiments of your mind; but then take this along with you, *Cecus*, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in other people. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have seen in other people.

REFLECTIONS.

The case of *Cecus*, is a common case; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be governed by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people, and how mightily they are pleased with humility and modesty, where-ever they find them.

All their speeches in favour of humility, and all their railings against pride, are looked upon as so many true exercises, and effects of their own humble spirit.

Whereas in truth, these are so far from being proper acts, or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

For the fuller of pride any one is himself, the more impatient will he be at the smallest instances of it in other people. And the less humility any one has in his own mind, the more will he demand, and be delighted with it in other people.

XII. Character of *Cognatus*.

COGNATUS is a sober, regular clergyman, of good repute in the world, and well esteemed in his parish. All his parishioners say he is an honest man, and very notable at making a bargain. The farmers listen to him with great attention, when he talks of the properest time of selling corn.

He has been for twenty years a diligent observer of markets, and has raised a considerable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very orthodox, and full of esteem for our English liturgy; and if he has not prayers on wednesdays and fridays, it is because his predecessor had not used the parish to any such custom.

As he cannot serve both his livings himself, so he makes it a matter of conscience to keep a sober curate upon one of them, whom he hires to take care of all the souls in the parish, at as cheap a rate as a sober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very prosperous all his time; but still he has had the uneasiness and vexations, that they have, who are deep in worldly business. Taxes, losses, crosses, bad mortgages, bad tenants, and the hardness of the times, are frequent subjects of his conversation: and a good or a bad season has a great effect upon his spirits.

Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a considerable fortune to a niece,

whom

whom he has politely educated in expensive finery, by what he has saved out of the tithes of two livings.

The neighbours look upon *Cognatus* as an happy clergyman, because they see him (as they call it) in good circumstances; and some of them intend to dedicate their own sons to the church, because they see how well it has succeeded with *Cognatus*, whose father was but an ordinary man.

REFLECTIONS.

Now if *Cognatus*, when he first entered into holy orders, had perceived how absurd a thing it is to grow rich by the gospel; if he had proposed to himself the example of some primitive father; if he had had the piety of the great St. Austin in his eye, who durst not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the church; if, instead of twenty years care to lay up treasures upon earth, he had distributed the income of every year in the most christian acts of charity and compassion:

If, instead of tempting his niece to be proud, and providing her with such ornaments, as the apostle forbids, he had cloathed, comforted, and assisted numbers of widows, orphans, and distressed, who were all to appear for him at the last day:

If, instead of the cares and anxieties of bad bonds, troublesome mortgages, and ill-bargains, he had had the constant comfort of knowing, that his treasure was securely laid up, where neither moth corrupteth nor thieves break through and steal; could it with any

any reason be said, that he had mistaken the spirit and dignity of his order, or lessened any of that happiness, which is to be found in his sacred employments?

If, instead of rejoicing in the happiness of a second living, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman to traffic for gain in holy things, as to open a shop:

If he had thought it better to recommend some honest labour to his niece, than to support her in idleness by the labours of a curate; better that she should want fine cloaths, and a rich husband, than that cures of souls should be farmed about, and brother clergymen not suffered to live by those altars at which they serve. If this had been the spirit of *Cognatus*, could it with any reason be said, that these rules of religion, this strictness of piety, had robbed *Cognatus* of any real happiness? Could it be said, that a life thus governed by the spirit of the gospel, must be dull and melancholy, if compared to that of raising a fortune for a niece?

XIII. Character of *Susurrus*.

SUSURRUS is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities: no one more constant at the service of the church, or whose heart is more affected with it: his charity is so great, that he almost starves himself, to be able to give greater alms to the poor. Yet

Yet *Sufurrus* had a prodigious failing along with these great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and discover all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You was welcome to tell him any thing of any body, provided that you did not do it in the stile of an enemy. He never disliked an evil speaker, but when his language was rough and passionate. If you would but whisper any thing gently, tho' it was ever so bad in itself, *Sufurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he visits, you generally hear him relating how sorry he is for the defects and failings of such a neighbour. He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour, how loath to say that which he is forced to say, and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be concealed.

Sufurrus had such a tender, compassionate manner of relating things the most prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even seemed, both to himself and to others, to be exercising a christian charity, at the same time that he was indulging a whispering, evil-speaking temper.

Sufurrus once whispered to a particular friend in great secrecy, something too bad to be spoke of publicly. He ended with saying, how glad he was, that it had not yet took wind, and that he had some hopes it might not be true, tho' the suspicions were very strong. His friend made him this reply:

You

You say, *Sufurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind; and that you have some hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your closet, and pray to God for this man, in such a manner, and with such earnestness, as you would pray for yourself on the like occasion.

Beseech God to interpose in his favour, to save him from false accusers, and bring all those to shame, who by uncharitable whispers, and secret stories, wound him, like those that stab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer then you may, if you please, go tell the same secret to some other friend, that you have told me.

Sufurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conscience, in as lively a manner, as if he had seen the books opened at the day of judgment.

All other arguments might have been resisted; but it was impossible for *Sufurrus* either to reject, or to follow this advice, without being equally self-condemned in the highest degree.

From that time to this, he has constantly used himself to this method of intercession; and his heart is so entirely changed by it, that he can now no more privately whisper any thing to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whisperings and evil-speakings, now hurt his ears, like oaths and curses; and he has appointed one day

in the week, to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himself before God, in the sorrowful confession of his former guilt.

REFLECTIONS.

It may well be wondered, how a man of so much piety as *Sufurrus*, could be so long deceived in himself, as to live in such a state of scandal and evil-speaking, without suspecting himself to be guilty of it. But it was the tenderness and seeming compassion with which he heard and related every thing, that deceived both himself and others.

This was a falseness of heart, which was only to be fully discovered, by the true charity of intercession.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themselves as *Sufurrus* did, were often to try their spirit by such an intercession, they would often find themselves to be such as they least of all suspected.

XIV. Character of *Ouranius*.

OURANIUS is a holy priest, full of the spirit of the gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it, is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all, as he loves himself; because he prays for them all, as often as he prays for himself.

If his whole life is one continued exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfied with any degree
of

of care and watchfulness, it is because he has learned the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God, as an intercessor for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; because he never considers them in any other view, than as so many persons, that by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his hope, his joy, and his crown of rejoicing.

He goes about his parish, and visits every body in it; but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them; he visits them to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their soul, that he may intercede with God for them, according to their particular necessities.

When *Ouranius* first entered into holy orders, he had a haughtiness in his temper, a great contempt and disregard for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has prayed away this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping, that God will sooner or later hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance.

The rudeness, ill-nature, or perverse behaviour of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but it now raises no other passion in him than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

Thus have his prayers for others, altered and amended the state of his own heart.

It

It would strangely delight you to see with what spirit he converses, with what tenderness he re- proves, with what affection he exhorts, and with what vigour he preaches; and it is all owing to this, because he reproveth, exhorts, and preaches to those, for whom he first prays to God.

This devotion softens his heart, enlightens his mind, sweetens his temper, and makes every thing that comes from him, instructive, amiable, and affecting.

At his first coming to his little village, it was as disagreeable to him as a prison, and every day seemed too tedious to be endured in so retired a place. He thought his parish was too full of poor and mean people, that were none of them fit for the conversation of a gentleman.

This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept much at home, writ notes upon Homer and Plautus, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was just in the midst of one of Homer's battles.

This was his polite, or I may rather say, poor, ignorant turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are so far from being tedious, or his parish too great a retirement, that he only wants more time to do that variety of good which his soul thirsts after. The solitude of his lit-

the parish is become matter of great comfort to him, because he hopes that God has placed him and his flock there, to make it their way to heaven.

He can now not only converse with, but gladly attend and wait upon, the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the weak and infirm, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people where-ever he can find them; and is so far from desiring to be considered as a gentleman, that he desires to be used as the servant of all; and in the spirit of his Lord and Master girds himself, and is glad to kneel down and wash any of their feet.

He now thinks the poorest creature in his parish good enough, and great enough, to deserve the humblest attendances, the kindest friendships, the tenderest offices he can possibly shew them.

He is so far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better conversation in the world, than to be talking with poor and mean people about the kingdom of heaven.

All these noble thoughts and divine sentiments are the effects of his great devotion; he presents every one so often before God in his prayers, that he never thinks he can esteem, reverence, or serve those enough, for whom he implores so many mercies from God.

Ouranius

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of holy scripture, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Jam. v. 16.

This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reason he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for ancient, poor people to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works may pierce the clouds, and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God himself said unto Abimelech concerning Abraham: *He is a prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.* Gen.xx.7.

And again, how he said of Job: *And my servant Job shall pray for you; for him I will accept.* Job. xiii. 8.

From these passages *Ouranius* justly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people such pardons, reliefs and blessings, thro' their prayers, as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes *Ouranius* exceedingly studious of christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways,

fearful of every error and defect in his life, lest his prayers for his flock should be less availing with God, thro' his own defects in holiness.

This makes him careful of every temper of his heart, give alms of all that he hath, watch, and fast, and mortify, and live according to the strictest rules of temperance, meekness, and humility, that he may be in some degree like an Abraham, or a Job, in his parish, and make such prayers for them, as God will hear and accept.

These are the happy effects, which a devout intercession hath produced in the life of *Ouranius*.

XV. Character of Paternus.

PATERNUS lived about two hundred years ago; he had but one son, whom he educated himself in his own house. As they were sitting together in the garden, when the child was ten years old, *Paternus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have spent wholly with me; and my love and tenderness to you, has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cause of all the comfort and pleasure that you enjoy: your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the last day that I should live with you. But

But, my child, tho' you now think yourself mighty happy, because you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whose love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive such blessings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have seen me daily worship; whom I daily call upon to bless both you and me, and all mankind; whose wondrous acts are recorded in those scriptures which you constantly read: that God who created the heavens and the earth; who brought a flood upon the old world; who saved Noah in the ark; who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whom Job blessed and praised in the greatest afflictions; who delivered the Israelites out of the hands of the Egyptians; who was the protector of righteous Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and holy Daniel; who sent so many prophets into the world; who sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem mankind: this God, who has done all these great things, who has created so many millions of men, who lived and died before you was born, with whom the spirits of good men that are departed this life, now live, whom infinite numbers of angels now worship in heaven; this great God who is the creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving father and friend, your good creator and nourisher,

from whom, and not from me, you received your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender elm which you there see.

I myself am not half the age of this shady oak, under which we sit; many of our fathers have sat under its boughs, we have all of us called it ours in our turn, though it stands, and drops its masters, as it drops its leaves.

You see, my son, this wide and large firmament over our heads, where the sun and moon, and all the stars, appear in their turns. If you was to be carried up to any of these bodies at this vast distance from us, you would still discover others as much above you, as the stars that you see here are above the earth. Were you to go up or down, east or west, north or south, you would find the same height without any top, and the same depth without any bottom.

And yet, my child, so great is God, that all these bodies added together are but as a grain of sand in his sight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all worlds, and all spirits, as if he had no son but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the hairs of your head, watches over you sleeping and waking, and has preserved you from a thousand dangers, which neither you nor I know any thing of.

How

How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often seen. Your late sickness has shewn you how little I could do for you in that state; and the frequent pains in your head are plain proofs, that I have no power to remove them.

I can bring you food and medicines, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nourishment; it is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worship, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet see him, but every thing you see, are so many marks of his power and presence, and he is nearer to you, than any thing that you can see.

Take him for your lord, and father, and friend, look up unto him as the fountain and cause of all the good that you have received through my hands, and reverence me only as the bearer and minister of God's good things unto you. And he that blessed my father before I was born, will bless you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happiness out of it.

But, my child, you belong to a greater family than mine; you are a younger member of the family of this Almighty Father of all nations, who has created infinite orders of angels, and numberless generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the same society in heaven.

You

You do well to reverence and obey my authority, because God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers, recorded in scripture, did for their children, who are now in rest and peace with God.

I shall in a short time die, and leave you to God, and yourself; and if God forgiveth my sins, I shall go to his Son Jesus Christ, and live among patriarchs and prophets, saints and martyrs, where I shall pray for you, and hope for your safe arrival at the same place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on these great things, and your soul will soon grow great and noble by so meditating upon them.

Let your thoughts often leave these gardens, these fields and farms, to contemplate on God and heaven, to consider upon angels, and the spirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been used to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do any thing, unless you first knew my will; so let it now be a rule of your life, to look up to God in all your actions, to do every thing in his fear, and to abstain from every thing that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place, for there is no place where he is not.

God

God keepeth a book of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels, and according as your actions are there found, you will either be received to the happiness of those holy men who have died before you, or be turned away amongst wicked spirits, that are never to see God any more.

Never forget this book, my son, for it is written, it must be opened, you must see it, and you must be tried by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the hand writing of God may not appear against you.

God, my child, is all love, and wisdom, and goodness; and every thing that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot please God, but so far as you strive to walk in love, wisdom, and goodness. As all wisdom, love, and goodness, proceeds from God; so nothing but love, wisdom, and goodness, can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you join yourself to him; and when you love what he dislikes, then you oppose him, and separate yourself from him. This is the true and the right way; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

First

First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of him magnificently, speak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power; frequent his service, and pray unto him frequently and constantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with such tenderness and affection, as you love yourself. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preserves them, and then strive to love the world as God loves it.

God would have all men to be happy; therefore do you will, and desire the same. All men are great instances of divine love, therefore let all men be instances of your love.

But above all, my son, mark this, never do any thing through strife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do any thing in order to excel other people, but in order to please God, and because it is his will, that you should do every thing in the best manner that you can.

For if it is once a pleasure to you to excel other people, it will by degrees be a pleasure to you, not to see other people so good as yourself.

Banish therefore every thought of self-pride, and self-distinction, and accustom yourself to rejoice in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow-creatures, and be as glad to see any of their good actions, as your own.

For

For as God is as well pleased with their well-doing, as with your's; so you ought to desire, that every thing that is wise, and holy, and good, may be performed in as high a manner by other people, as by yourself.

Let this therefore be your only motive and spur to all good actions, honest industry, and business, to do every thing in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reason, because it is pleasing to God, who desires your perfection, and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my son, you will be master of all my estate, which will be a great deal more than the necessities of one family require. Therefore, as you are to be charitable to the souls of men, and wish them the same happiness with you in heaven, so be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men, so let that part of them which is fallen to your share, be employed, as God would have all employed, for the common good of all.

Do good, my son, first of all to those that most deserve it, but remember to do good to all. The greatest sinners receive daily instances of God's goodness towards them; he nourishes and preserves them, that they may repent, and return to him; do you therefore, imitate God, and think no one too bad

bad to receive your relief and kindness, when you see that he wants it.

I am teaching you Latin and Greek, not that you should desire to be a great critic, a fine poet, or an eloquent orator; I would not have your heart feel any of these desires, for the desire of these accomplishments is a vanity of the mind, and the masters of them are generally vain men. For the desire of any thing that is not a real good, lessens the application of the mind after that which is so.

But I teach you these languages, that at proper times you may look into the history of past ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world; that reading the writings of the ancient sages, you may see how wisdom and virtue have been the praise of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by their wise sayings.

Let truth and plainness therefore be the only ornament of your language, and study nothing but how to think of all things as they deserve, to chuse every thing that is best, to live according to reason and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God.

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a scholar, no finer a gentleman, than these tempers will make you. As true religion is nothing else but simple nature governed
by

by right reason, so it loves and requires great plainness and simplicity of life. Therefore avoid all superfluous shews of finery and equipage, and let your house be plainly furnished with moderate conveniences. Do not consider what your estate can afford, but what right reason requires.

Let your dress be sober, clean, and modest, not to set out the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For it is highly reasonable, that you should be one man, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such as you are inwardly.

As to your meat and drink, in them observe the highest rules of christian temperance and sobriety; consider your body only as the servant and minister of your soul; and only so nourish it, as it may best perform an humble and obedient service to it.

But, my son, observe this as a most principal thing, which I shall remember you of as long as I live with you.

Hate and despise all human glory, for it is nothing else but human folly. It is the greatest snare, and the greatest betrayer, that you can possibly admit into your heart.

Love humility in all its instances, practise it in all its parts, for it is the noblest state of the soul of man; it will set your heart and affections right towards
God,

God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility, condescend to all the weakness, and infirmities of your fellow creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their prosperities, compassionate their distress, receive their friendship, overlook their unkindness, forgive their malice, be a servant of servants, and condescend to do the lowest offices to the lowest of mankind.

Aspire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition but to do every thing in so reasonable and religious a manner, that you may be glad that God is every where present, and sees and observes all your actions. The greatest trial of humility, is an humble behaviour towards your equals in age, estate, and condition of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards these people. Let all your behaviour towards them be governed by unfeigned love. Have no desire to put any of your equals below you, nor an anger at those that would put themselves above you. If they are proud, they are ill of a very bad distemper; let them therefore have your tender pity, and perhaps your meekness may prove an occasion of their cure. But if your humility should do them no good, it will however be the greatest good that you can do to yourself.

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always striving to exceed him, and that is yourself.

The time of practising these precepts, my child, will soon be over with you; the world will soon slip through your hands, or rather you will soon slip through it; it seems but the other day since I received these same instructions from my dear father, that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my father said unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the same instructions.

Thus did *Paterius* educate his son.

XVI. Character of *Claudius*.

IT is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of figure and estate, and are to act the part of such a station in human life; you are not called, as *Elijah* was, to be a prophet, or as *St. Paul*, to be an apostle.

But will you therefore not love yourself? Will you not seek and study your own happiness, because you are not called to preach up the same things to other people?

You

You would think it very absurd, for a man not to value his own health, because he was not a physician; or the preservation of his limbs, because he was not a bone setter. Yet it is more absurd for you, *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your soul in piety, because you are not an apostle or a bishop.

Consider this text of scripture, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Rom. viii. 13, 14. Do you think that this scripture does not equally relate to all mankind? Can you find any exception here for men of figure and estates? Is it not a spiritual and devout life here made the common condition, on which all men are to become sons of God? Will you leave hours of prayer, and rules of devotion, to particular states of life, when nothing but the same spirit of devotion can save you, or any man, from eternal death?

Consider again this text: *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 2 Cor. v. 10. Now if your estate would excuse you from appearing before this judgment seat; if your figure could protect you from receiving according

cording to your works, there would be some pretence for your leaving devotion to other people. But if you, who are now thus distinguished, must then appear naked amongst common souls, without any other distinction from others, but such as your virtues or sins give; does it not as much concern you, as any prophet, or apostle, to make the best provision for the best rewards at that great day?

Again, consider this great doctrine of the apostle: *For none of us, that is, of us Christians, liveth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.*

Now are you, *Claudius*, excepted out of the doctrine of this text? Will you, because of your condition, leave it to any particular sort of people, to live and die unto Christ? If so, you must leave it to them, to be redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ. For it is the express doctrine of the text, that for this end Christ died and rose again, that none of us should live to himself. 'Tis not that priests, or apostles, or monks, or hermits, should live no longer to themselves; but that none of us that is, no Christian of what state soever, should live unto himself.

If therefore there be any instances of piety, any rules of devotion, which you can neglect, and yet

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live

live as truly unto Christ, as if you observed them, this text calls you to no such devotion. But if you forsake such devotion, as you yourself know is expected from some particular sorts of people; such devotion as you know becomes people that live wholly unto Christ, that aspire after great piety; if you neglect such devotion for any worldly consideration, that you may live more to your own temper and taste, more to the fashions and ways of the world, you forsake the terms on which all Christians are to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Observe farther, how the same doctrine is taught by St. Peter; *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* 1 Pet. i. 15.

If therefore, *Claudius*, you are one of those that are here called, you see what it is that you are called to. It is not to have so much religion as suits with your temper, your business, or your pleasures; it is not to a particular sort of piety, that may be sufficient for gentlemen of figure and estates; but it is, first, to be holy, as he which hath called you is holy; secondly, it is to be thus holy in all manner of conversation; that is, to carry this spirit and degree of holiness into every part and through the whole form of your life.

And the reason the apostle immediately gives, why this spirit of holiness must be the common spirit of
Christians

Christians, as such, is very affecting, and such as equally calls upon all sorts of Christians: *Forasmuch as ye know, says he, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation—but with the precious blood of Christ, &c.*

As if he had said, forasmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this state of holiness, entered into a society with Christ, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by such a mysterious instance of love, as infinitely exceeds every thing that can be thought of in this world; since God has redeemed you to himself, and your own happiness, at so great a price, how base and shameful must it be, if you do not henceforth devote yourselves wholly to the glory of God, and become holy, as he who hath called you is holy?

If therefore, *Claudius*, you consider your figure and estate; or if, in the words of the text, you consider your gold and silver, and the corruptible things of this life, as any reason why you may live to your own humour and fancy, why you may neglect a life of strict piety and great devotion: if you think any thing in the world can be an excuse for your not imitating the holiness of Christ in the whole course and form of your life, you make yourself as guilty as if you should neglect the holiness of Christianity, for the sake of picking straws.

For the greatness of this new state of life to which we are called in Christ Jesus, to be for ever as the angels of God in heaven, and the greatness of the price by which we are made capable of this state of glory, has turned every thing that is worldly, temporal, and corruptible, into an equal littleness; and made it as great baseness and folly, as great a contempt of the blood of Christ, to neglect any degrees of holiness, because you are a man of some estate and quality, as it would be to neglect it, because you had a fancy to pick straws.

Again; the same apostle saith, *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* 1 Cor. vi. 19. 20.

How poorly therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the scripture? how little do you know of Christianity if can yet talk of your estate and condition, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more your own, than he that has no estate or dignity in the world? Must mean and little people preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost, by watching, fasting, and prayer; but may you indulge yours in idleness, in lusts, and sensuality, because you have so much rent, or such a title of distinction? How poor and ignorant are such thoughts as these!

And

And yet you must either think thus, or else acknowledge, that the holiness of saints, prophets, and apostles, is the holiness that you are to labour after, with all the diligence and care that you can.

And if you leave it to others, to live in such piety and devotion, in such self-denial, humility, and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit: you must leave it to them also, to have the benefit of the blood of Christ.

Again; the apostle saith, *You know how we exhorted, comforted, and charged every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.* 1 Theff. ii. 11.

You perhaps, *Claudius*, have often heard these words, without ever thinking how much they required of you. And yet you cannot consider them, without perceiving to what an eminent state of holiness they call you.

For how can the holiness of a christian life be set before you in higher terms, than when it is represented to you, as walking worthy of God? Can you think of any abatements of virtue, any neglects of devotion, that are well consistent with a life, that is to be made worthy of God? Can you suppose that any man walks in this manner, but he that watches over all his steps, and considers how every thing he does may be done in the spirit of holiness? And yet as high as these expressions carry this holiness, it is

here plainly made the necessary holiness of all Christians. For the apostle does not here exhort his fellow apostles and saints to this holiness, but he commands all Christians to endeavour after it: *We charged, says he, every one of you that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.*

Again; St. Peter saith, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it, as of the ability that God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Do you not here, *Claudius*, plainly perceive your high calling? Is he that speaketh to have such regard to his words, that he appears to speak as by the direction of God? Is he that giveth, to take care that he so giveth, that what he disposeth of may appear to be a gift that he hath of God? And is all this to be done, that God may be glorified in all things?

Must it not then be said, Has any man nobility, dignity of state, or figure in the world? Let him so use his nobility, or figure of life, that it may appear he uses these as the gifts of God, for the greater setting forth of his glory. Is there now, *Claudius*, any thing forced, or far-fetched in the conclusion? Is it not the plain sense of the words, that every thing in life is to be made a matter of holiness unto God? If so, then your estate and dignity is so far
from

from excusing you from great piety and holiness of life, that it lays you under a greater necessity of living more to the glory of God, because you have more of his gifts that may be made serviceable to it.

For people therefore of figure, or business, or dignity in the world, to leave great piety and eminent devotion to any particular orders of men, or such as they think have little else to do in the world, is to leave the kingdom of God to them.

For it is the very end of Christianity to redeem all orders of men, into one holy society, that rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, may in one and the same spirit of piety, become a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that are to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light.* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

XVII. Character of Cælia.

CÆLIA is always telling you how provoked she is, what intolerable, shocking things happen to her, what monstrous usage she suffers, and what vexation she meets with every where. She tells you, that her patience is quite wore out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every assembly that she is at sends her home provoked; something

or other has been said or done, that no reasonable, well-bred person ought to bear. Poor people that want her charity, are sent away with hasty answers, not because she has not a heart to part with any money, but because she is too full of some trouble of her own, to attend to the complaints of others. *Celia* has no business upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune; but yet, by the doleful turn of her mind, you would be apt to think, that she had neither food nor lodging. If you see her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when she speaks to you, it is because she is just come from a visit, where *Lupus* took no notice at all of her, but talked all the time to *Lucinda*, who has not half her fortune. When cross accidents have so disordered her spirit, that she is forced to send for the doctor to make her able to eat; she tells him, in great anger at providence, that she never was well since she was born, and that she envies every beggar that she sees in health.

This is the disquiet life of *Celia*, who has nothing to torment her but her own spirit.



XVIII. Character of Feliciana.

IF you was to live with *Feliciana* but one half year, you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once, but through a littleness of mind and want of thought.

She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting day. She is again to change the colour of her cloaths, again to have a new head, and again put patches on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the play-house, and who sings finest at the opera. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily and politely about nothing.

She is to be again delighted with some new fashion; and again angry at the change of some old one. She is to be again at cards, and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed with imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birth night, and again to see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town, again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels, and partings.

If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit, and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprising new dress, or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the substantial and regular parts of *Felician's* happiness; and she never knew a pleasant day in her life, but it was owing to some one, or more, of these things.

It is for this happiness, that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and chearful to consider what is right or wrong in regard to eternity; or to listen to the sound of such dull words, as wisdom, piety, and devotion.

It is for fear of losing some of this happiness, that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys, which make saints and angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God.

REFLECTIONS.

Let it here be observed, that as poor a round of happiness as this appears, yet most women that avoid the restraints of religion for a gay life, must be content with very small parts of it. As they have not *Felician's* fortune and figure in the world, so they must give away the comforts of a pious life, for a very small part of her happiness. And

And if you look into the world, and observe the lives of those women, whom no arguments can persuade to live wholly unto God, in a wise and pious employment of themselves, you will find most of them to be such, as lose all the comforts of religion, without gaining the tenth part of *Felician's* happiness. They are such as spend their time and fortunes only in mimicking the pleasures of richer people; and rather look and long after, than enjoy those delusions, which are only to be purchased by considerable fortunes.

But if a woman of high birth, and great fortune, having read the gospel, should rather wish to be an under-servant in some pious family, where wisdom, piety, and great devotion, directed all the actions of every day: if she should rather wish this, than to live at the top of *Felician's* happiness; I should think her neither mad, nor melancholy; but that she judged, as rightly of the spirit of the gospel, as if she had rather wished to be poor Lazarus at the gate, than to be the rich man cloathed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day.

XIX. Character of *Flavia*.

FLAVIA and *Miranda* are two maiden sisters, that have each of them two hundred pounds a year. They buried their parents, twenty years ago, and have since that time spent their estate as they pleased.

Flavia has been the wonder of all her friends, for her excellent management, in making so surprising a figure in so moderate a fortune. Several ladies that have twice her fortune, are not able to be always so genteel, and so constant at all places of pleasure and expence. She has every thing that is in the fashion, and is in every place where there is any diversion. *Flavia* is very orthodox, she talks warmly against heretics and scismatics, is generally at church, and often at the sacrament. She once commended a sermon that was against the pride and vanity of dress, and thought it was very just against *Lucinda*, whom she takes to be a great deal finer than she need to be. If any one asks *Flavia* to do something in charity, if she likes the person who makes the proposal, or happens to be in a right temper, she will toss him half a crown or a crown, and tell him, if he knew what a long millener's bill she had just received, he would think it a great deal for her to give. A quarter of a year after this, she hears a sermon upon the necessity of charity; she thinks the man preaches well, that it

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is a very proper subject, that people want much to be put in mind of it; but she applies nothing to herself, because she remembers that she gave a crown some time ago, when she could so ill spare it.

As for poor people themselves, she will admit of no complaints from them; she is very positive they are all cheats and liars, and will say any thing to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways.

You would think *Flavia* had the tenderest conscience in the world, if you was to see, how scrupulous and apprehensive she is of the guilt and danger of giving amifs.

She buys all books of wit and humour, and has made an expensive collection of all our English poets. For she says, one cannot have a true taste of any of them, without being very conversant with them all.

She will sometimes read a book of piety, if it is a short one, if it is much commended for stile and language, and she can tell where to borrow it.

Flavia is very idle, and yet very fond of fine work: this makes her often sit working in bed until noon, and be told many a long story before she is up; so that I need not tell you, that her morning devotions are not always rightly performed.

Flavia would be a miracle of piety, if she was but half so careful of her soul, as she is of her body. The rising of a pimple in her face, the sting of a gnat

gnat, will make her keep her room two or three days, and she thinks they are very rash people, that do not take care of things in time. This makes her so over-careful of her health, that she never thinks she is well enough; and so over indulgent, that she never can be really well. So that it costs her a great deal in sleeping draughts, and waking draughts, in spirits for the head, in drops for the nerves, in cordials for the stomach, and in saffron for her tea.

If you visit *Flavia* on the sunday, you will always meet good company, you will know what is doing in the world, you will hear the last lampoon, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what plays were acted that week, which is the finest song in the opera, who was intolerable at the last assembly, and what games are most in fashion. *Flavia* thinks they are atheists that play at cards on the sunday, but she will tell you the nicety of all the games, what cards she held, how she played them, and the history of all that happened at play, as soon as she comes from church. If you would know who is rude and ill natured, who is vain and foppish, who lives too high, and who is in debt: if you would know what is the quarrel at a certain house, or who and who are in love: if you would know how late *Belinda* comes home at night, what cloaths she has bought, how she loves compliments, and

and what a long story she told at such a place: if you would know how cross *Lucius* is to his wife, what ill-natured things he says to her, when nobody hears him; if you would know how they hate one another in their hearts, though they appear so kind in public; you must visit *Flavia* on the sunday. But still she has so great a regard for the holiness of the sunday, that she has turned a poor old widow out of her house, as a profane wretch, for having been found once mending her cloaths on the sunday night.

Thus lives *Flavia*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent about fifteen hundred and sixty sundays after this manner. She will have wore about two hundred different suits of cloaths. Out of this thirty years of her life, fifteen of them will have been disposed of in bed; and of the remaining fifteen, about fourteen of them will have been consumed in eating, drinking, dressing, visiting, conversation, reading, and hearing plays and romances, at operas, assemblies, balls and diversions. For you may reckon all the time she is up, thus spent, except about an hour and half, that is disposed of at church, most sundays in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of oeconomy, she will have spent sixty hundred pounds upon herself, bating only some shillings, crowns or half-crowns, that have gone from her in accidental charities.

REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS.

I shall not take upon me to say, that it is impossible for *Flavia* to be saved; but thus much must be said, that she has no grounds from scripture to think she is in the way of salvation. For her whole life is in direct opposition to all those tempers and practices, which the gospel has made necessary to salvation.

If you was to hear her say, that she had lived all her life like Anna the prophetess, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance, than for her to say, that she had been striving to enter in at the strait gate, or making any one doctrine of the gospel a rule of her life.

She may as well say, that she lived with our Saviour when he was upon earth, as that she has lived in imitation of him, or made it any part of her care to live in such tempers, as he required of all those that would be his disciples. She may as truly say, that she has every day washed the saints feet, as that she has lived in christian humility and poverty of spirit; and as reasonably think, that she has taught a charity-school, as that she has lived in works of charity. She has as much reason to think, that she has been a centinal in an army, as that she has

has lived in watching, and self-denial. And it may as fairly be said, that she lived by the labour of her hands, as that she had given all diligence to make her calling and election sure.

* XX. *Character of Miranda:*

MIRANDA (the sister of *Flavia*) is a sober reasonable Christian; as soon as she was mistress of her time and fortune, it was her first thought, how she might best fulfil every thing that God required of her in the use of them, and how she might make the best and happiest use of this short life. She depends upon the truth of what our blessed Lord hath said, that there is but one thing needful; and therefore makes her whole life but one continual labour after it. She has but one reason for doing or not doing, for liking or not liking any thing, and that is the will of God. She is not so weak, as to pretend to add, what is called the fine lady, to the true Christian: *Miranda* thinks too well, to be taken with the sound of such silly words; she has renounced the world to follow Christ in the exercise of humility, charity, devotion, abstinence, and heavenly affections; and that is *Miranda's* fine breeding.

Whilst she was under her mother, she was forced to be genteel, to live in ceremony, to sit up late at nights, to be in the folly of every fashion, and

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always visiting on Sundays; to go loaded with a burden of finery to the holy sacrament; to be in every polite conversation, to hear prophaneness at the play-house, and wanton songs and love intrigues at the opera, to dance at public places, that fops and rakes might admire the fineness of her shape, and the beauty of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life, makes her exceeding careful to atone for it, by a contrary behaviour.

Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and herself, but she considers all as due to God, and so does every thing in his name, and for his sake. This makes her consider her fortune, as the gift of God, that is to be used, as every thing is that belongs to God, for the wise and reasonable ends of a christian and holy life. Her fortune therefore is divided betwixt herself, and several other poor people, and she has only her part of relief from it. She thinks it the same folly to indulge herself in needless, vain expences, as to give to other people to spend in the same way. Therefore as she will not give a poor man money to go see a puppet-show, neither will she allow herself any to spend in the same manner; thinking it very proper to be as wise herself, as she expects a poor man should be. For as it is a folly and a crime in a poor man, says *Miranda*, to waste what is given him, in foolish trifles, whilst he wants meat, drink, and cloaths: so is it less folly, or a less crime in me to spend that money in silly diversions, which might
be

be so much better spent in imitation of the divine goodness, in works of kindness and charity towards my fellow creatures, and fellow Christians? If a poor man's own necessities are a reason, why he should not waste any of his money idly, surely the necessities of the poor, the excellency of charity, which is received as done to Christ himself, is a much greater reason, why no one should ever waste any of his money. For if he does so, he does not only do like the poor man, only waste that which he wants himself, but he wastes that which is wanted for the most noble use, and which Christ himself is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a poor man, and look upon him as a wretch, when he throws away that which should buy his own bread; how must we appear in the sight of God, if we make a wanton, idle use of that, which would buy bread and cloaths for the hungry and naked brethren, who are as near and dear to God, as we are, and fellow heirs of the same state of future glory? This is the spirit of *Miranda*, and thus she uses the gifts of God.

Every morning sees her early at her prayers, she rejoices in the beginning of every day, because it begins all her pious rules of holy living, and brings the fresh pleasures of repeating them. She seems to be as a guardian angel, to those that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers, blessing the place where she dwells, and making intercession with God for those that are asleep.

Her devotions have had some intervals, and God has heard several of her private prayers, before the light is suffered to enter into her sister's room. *Miranda* does not know what it is to have a dull half day; the returns of her hours of prayers, and her religious exercises, come too often to let any considerable part of time lie heavy upon her hands.

When you see her at work, you see the same wisdom that governs all her other actions, she is either doing something that is necessary for herself, or necessary for others, who want to be assisted. There is scarce a poor family in the neighbourhood, but wear something or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her wise and pious mind, neither wants the amusement, nor can bear with the folly of idle impertinent work. She can admit of no such folly as this in the day, because she is to answer for all her actions at night. When there is no wisdom to be observed in the employment of her hands, when there is no useful or charitable work to be done, *Miranda* will work no more. At her table she lives strictly by this rule of holy scripture, *whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This makes her begin and end every meal, as she begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion: she eats and drinks only for the sake of living, and with so regular an abstinence, that every meal is an exercise of self-denial, and she humbles her body, every time that she is forced to feed it. If *Miranda* was to run a race for her
life

life, she would submit to a diet that was proper for it. But as the race which is set before her, is a race of holiness, purity, and heavenly affection, which she is to finish in a corrupt disordered body of earthly passions, so her every day diet has only this one end, to make her body fitter for this spiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of scales, but she weighs it in a much better balance; so much as gives a proper strength to her body, and renders it able and willing to obey the soul, to join in psalms and prayers, and lift up eyes and hands towards heaven with greater readiness, so much is *Miranda's* meal. So that *Miranda* will never have her eyes swell with fatness, or pant under a heavy load of flesh, till she has changed her religion.

The holy scriptures, especially of the New Testament, are her daily study; these she reads with a watchful attention, constantly casting an eye upon herself, and trying herself by every doctrine that is there. When she has the New Testament in her hand she supposes herself at the feet of our Saviour and his apostles, and makes every thing that she learns of them, so many laws of her life. She receives their sacred words with as much attention, and reverence, as if she saw their persons, and knew that they were just come from heaven, on purpose to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks, that trying herself every day by the doctrines of scripture, is the only possible way to be ready for her trial at the last day. She is some-

times afraid that she lays out too much money in books, because she cannot forbear buying all practical books, of any note; especially such as enter into the heart of religion, and describe the inward holiness of the christian life. But of all human writings, the lives of pious persons, and eminent saints, are her greatest delight. In these she searches as for hidden treasure, hoping to find some secret of holy living, some uncommon degree of piety, which she may make her own. By this means *Miranda* has her head and heart stored with all the principles of wisdom and holiness, she is so full of the one main business of life, that she finds it difficult to converse upon any other subject; and if you are in her company, when she thinks proper to talk, you must be made wiser and better, whether you will or no.

To relate her charity, would be to relate the history of every day for twenty years; for so long has all her fortune been spent that way. She has set up near twenty poor tradesmen that had failed in their business, and saved as many from failing. She has educated several poor children, that were picked up in the streets, and put them in a way of an honest employment. As soon as any labourer is confined at home with sickness, she sends him, till he recovers, twice the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family, as usual, and the other to provide things convenient for his sickness.

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If a family seem too large to be supported by the labour of those that can work in it, she pays their rent, and gives them something yearly towards their cloathing. By this means there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year blessing her in their prayers.

If there is any poor man or woman, that is more than ordinarily wicked and reprobate, *Miranda* has her eye upon them, she watches their time of need and adversity; and if she can discover that they are in any great streights or afflictions, she gives them speedy relief. She has this care for this sort of people, because she once saved a profligate person from being carried to prison, who immediately became a true penitent.

There is nothing in the character of *Miranda* more to be admired, than this temper. For this tenderness of affection towards the most abandoned sinners, is the highest instance of a divine and god-like soul.

Miranda once passed by a house, when the man and his wife were cursing and swearing at one another in a most dreadful manner, and three children crying about them; this sight so much affected her compassionate mind, that she went the next day, and bought the three children, that they might not be ruined by living with such wicked parents; they now live with *Miranda*, are blessed with her care and prayers, and all the good works which she can

do for them. They hear her talk, they see her live, they join with her in psalms and prayers. The eldest of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and shews a turn of mind so remarkably pious, that *Miranda* intends him for holy orders; that being thus saved himself, he may be zealous in the salvation of souls, and do to other miserable objects, as she has done to him.

Miranda is a constant relief to poor people in their misfortunes and accidents; there are sometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themselves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a cow, or horse, or some little robbery, would keep them in distress all their lives. She does not suffer them to grieve under such accidents as these. She immediately gives them the full value of their loss, and makes use of it as a means of raising their minds towards God.

She has a great tenderness for old people, that are grown past their labour. The parish allowance to such people, is very seldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reason, they are the constant objects of her care; she adds so much to their allowance, as somewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This she does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that being free from trouble and distress, they may serve God in peace and tranquillity of mind. She has generally a large number of this kind, who by her charities and exhortations to holiness, spend their last days in great piety and devotion.

Miranda

Miranda never wants compassion, even to common beggars; especially towards those that are old, or sick, or full of sores, that want eyes or limbs. She hears their complaints with tenderness, gives them some proofs of her kindness, and never rejects them with hard, or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow creature.

If a poor traveller tells her, that he has neither strength, nor food, nor money left, she never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him, that she cannot relieve him, because he may be a cheat, or she does not know him; but she relieves him for that reason, because he is a stranger, and unknown to her. For it is the most noble part of charity, to be kind and tender to those whom we never saw before and perhaps may never see again in this life. *I was a stranger, and ye took me in, saith our blessed Saviour; but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve persons that are unknown to them?*

Miranda considers, that Lazarus was a common beggar; that he was the care of Angels, and carried into Abraham's bosom. She considers, that our blessed Saviour and his apostles were kind to beggars; that they spoke comfortably to them, healed their diseases, and restored eyes and limbs to the lame and blind. That Peter said to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, *Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*

Miranda

Miranda, therefore, never treats beggars with disregard and aversion, but she imitates the kindness of our Saviour and his apostles towards them; and though she cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet she relieves them, with that power that she hath; and may say with the Apostle, *Such as I have give I thee in the name of Jesus Christ.*

It may be, said *Miranda*, that I may often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an ill use of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodness? Does not God make his sun rise on the evil, and on the good? Is not this the very goodness, that is recommended to us in scripture, that by imitating of it, we may be children of our Father which is in heaven, who sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust? And shall I withhold a little money, or food, from my fellow creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own great goodness; and shall I be so absurd, as to withhold my charity from a poor brother, because he may perhaps not deserve it? Shall I use a measure towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me?

Besides, where has the scripture made merit the rule or measure of charity? On the contrary, the scripture saith, *If thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.*

Now

Now this plainly teaches us, that the merit of persons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindness to those that least of all deserve it. For if I am to love and do good to my worst enemies; if I am to be charitable to them, notwithstanding all their spite and malice, surely merit is no measure of charity. If I am not to withhold my charity from such bad people, and who are at the same time my enemies, surely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I neither know to be bad people, nor any way my enemies.

You will perhaps say, that by this means I encourage people to be beggars. But the same thoughtless objection may be made against all kinds of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The same may be said against forgiving our enemies, for it may encourage people to do us hurt. The same may said, even against the goodness of God, that by pouring his blessings on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, evil and unjust men are encouraged in their wicked ways. The same may be said against cloathing the naked, or giving medicines to the sick, for that may encourage people to neglect themselves, and be careless of their health. But when the love of God dwelleth in you; when it has enlarged your heart, and filled you with bowels of mercy and compassion, you will make no more such objections as these.

When

When you are at any time turning away the poor, the old, the sick and helpless traveller, the lame, or the blind, ask yourself this question; Do I sincerely wish these poor creatures may be as happy as Lazarus, that was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow heirs with me in eternal glory? Now if you search into your soul, you will find that there is none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for any one heartily to wish a poor creature so great a happiness and yet not have a heart to give him a small alms. For this reason, says *Miranda*, as far as I can, I give to all, because I pray to God to forgive all; and I cannot refuse an alms to those, whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of eternal glory; but am glad to shew some degree of love to such, as, I hope, will be the objects of the infinite love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assured us, *it be more blessed to give than to receive*, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms, as so many friends and benefactors, that come to do us a greater good than they can receive, that come to exalt our virtue, to be witnesses of our charity, to be monuments of our love, to be our advocates with God, to be to us in Christ's stead, to appear for us at the day of judgment, and to help us to a blessedness greater than our alms can bestow on them.

REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS.

This is the spirit, and this is the life of the devout *Miranda*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent sixty hundred pounds in charity, for that which she allows herself, may fairly be reckoned amongst her alms.

When she dies, she must shine amongst apostles, and saints, and martyrs; she must stand amongst the first servants of God, and be glorious amongst those that have fought the good fight, and finished their course with joy.

XXI. Character of Matilda.

MATILDA is a fine woman, of good breeding, great sense, and much religion. She has three daughters that are educated by herself. She will not trust them with any one else, or at any school, for fear they should learn any thing ill. She stays with the dancing-master all the time he is with them, because she will hear every thing that is said to them. She has heard them read the scriptures so often, that they can repeat great part of it without book: and there is scarce a good book of devotion, but you may find it in their closets.

Had *Matilda* lived in the first ages of Christianity, when it was practised in the fulness and plainness of its doctrines, she had in all probability been one of its

its greatest saints. But as she was born in corrupt times, where she wants examples of christian perfection, and hardly ever saw a piety higher than her own; so she has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was meanly dressed in her life; and nothing pleases her in dress, but that which is very rich, and beautiful to the eye.

Her daughters see her great zeal for religion; but then they see an equal earnestness for all sorts of finery. They see she is not negligent of her devotion; but then they see her more careful to preserve her complexion, and to prevent those changes, which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have missed the church; but then they are more afraid to see her, if they are not laced as strait as they can possibly be.

She often shews them her own picture, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them, how distracted he was with passion at the first sight of her; and that she had never had so fine a complexion, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

Matilda is so intent upon all the arts of improving their dress, that she has some new fancy almost every day; and leaves no ornament untried, from the richest jewel to the poorest flower. She is so nice and critical in her judgment, so sensible of the smallest error, that the maid is often forced to dress and undress her daughters three or four times a day, before she can be satisfied with it. The

The children see so plainly the temper of their mother, that they even affect to be more pleased with dress, and to be more fond of every little ornament, than they really are, merely to gain her favour.

They saw their eldest sister once brought to her tears, and her perverseness severely reprimanded, for presuming to say, that she thought it was better to cover the neck, than go so far naked as the modern dress requires.

She stints them in their meals, and is very scrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many fine shapes she has seen spoiled in her time for want of such care. If a pimple rises in their faces, she is in a great fright, and they themselves are as afraid to see her with it, as if they had committed some great sin.

Whenever they begin to look sanguine and healthful, she calls in the assistance of the doctor; and if physic, or issues, will keep the complexion from inclining to coarse or ruddy, she thinks them well employed.

By this means they are poor, pale, sickly, infirm creatures, vapoured through want of spirits, crying at the smallest accidents, swooning away at any thing that frights them, and hardly able to bear the weight of their best cloaths.

The eldest daughter lived as long as she could under this discipline, and died in the twentieth year of her age.

When

When her body was opened, it appeared that her ribs had grown into her liver, and that her other entrails were much hurt, by being crushed together with her stays, which her mother had ordered to be twitched so strait, that it often brought tears into her eyes, whilst the maid was dressing her.

Her youngest daughter is run away with a gamester, a man of great beauty, who in dressing and dancing has no superior.

Matilda says, she should die with grief at this accident, but that her conscience tells her, she has contributed nothing to it herself. She appeals to their closets, to their books of devotion, to testify what care she has taken to establish her children in a life of solid piety and devotion.

REFLECTIONS.

Though I do not intend to say, that no daughters are brought up in a better way than this, for I hope there are many that are; yet thus much I believe may be said, that the much greater part of them are not brought up so well, or accustomed to so much religion, as in the present instance.

Their minds are turned as much to the care of their beauty and dress, and the indulgence of vain desires, as in the present case, without having such rules of devotion to stand against it. So that if solid piety, humility, and a sober sense of themselves, is much wanted in that sex, it is the plain and natural consequence of a vain and corrupt education.

And

And if they are often too ready to receive the first fops, beaux, and fine dancers, for their husbands; it is no wonder they should like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themselves.

And if they are often seen to lose that little religion they were taught in their youth, it is no more to be wondered at, than to see a little flower choaked and killed amongst rank weeds.

For personal pride, and affectation, a delight in beauty, and fondness for finery, are tempers that must either kill all religion in the soul, or be themselves killed by it; they can no more thrive together, than health and sickness.

XXII. Character of Eusebia.

EUSEBIA is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good estate for five daughters, whom she brings up as one intrusted by God to fit five virgins for the kingdom of heaven. Her family has the same regulation as a religious house, and all its orders tend to the support of a constant, regular devotion.

She, her daughters, and her maids, meet together at all the hours of prayer in the day, and chant psalms, and other devotions, and spend the rest of their time in such good works, and innocent diversions, as render them fit to return to their psalms and prayers.

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She loves them as her spiritual children, and they reverence her as their spiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondest friends.

She has divided part of her estate amongst them, that every one may be charitable out of their own stock, and each of them take it in their turns to provide for the poor and sick of the parish.

Eusebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as sowing, knitting, spinning, and all other parts of housewifery; not for their amusement, but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others, and be saved from those temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them she had rather see them reduced to the necessity of maintaining themselves by their own work, than to have riches to excuse themselves from labour. For though, says she, you may be able to assist the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to assist them more.

If *Eusebia* has lived as free from sin as it is possible for human nature, it is because she is always watching and guarding against all instances of pride. And if her virtues are stronger and higher than other peoples, it is because they are all founded in a deep humility.

My children, says she, when your father died, I was much pitied by my friends, as having all the cares of a family, and all the management of an estate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle: I was grieved to see myself deprived of so

faithful a friend, and that such an eminent example of christian virtues should be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly affairs, which my friends thought so heavy upon me, they are most of them of our own making, and fall away as soon as we know ourselves.

If a person in a dream is disturbed with strange appearances, his trouble is over as soon as he is awake, and sees that it was the folly of a dream.

Now, when a right knowledge of ourselves enters into our minds, it makes as great a change in all our thoughts and apprehensions, as when we awake from the wanderings of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be mad or melancholy, who fancies himself to be glass, and so is afraid of stirring, or taking himself to be wax, dare not let the sun shine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which pass for wisdom, politeness, grandeur, happiness, and fine breeding, which shew as great ignorance of ourselves, and might as justly pass for thorough madness, as when a man fancies himself to be glass or ice.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without fine cloaths, that thinks it a happiness to have a face finely coloured, to have a skin delicately fair, that had rather die than be reduced to poverty, and be forced to work for a poor maintenance, is as ig-

norant of herself to the full, as he that fancies himself to be glass.

For this reason, all my discourse with you, has been to acquaint you with yourselves, and to accustom you to such books and devotions, as may best instruct you in this greatest of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you was born, what ancestors you were descended from, and what estate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactness, and yet be as ignorant of yourselves, as he that takes himself to be wax.

For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you pure spirits. I do not mean that you have not bodies that want meat and drink, and sleep and cloathing, but that all that deserves to be called you, is nothing else but spirit: A being spiritual and rational in its nature, that is, as contrary to all fleshly or corporeal beings, as life is contrary to death; that is made in the image of God, to live forever, never to cease any more, but to enjoy life and reason, and knowledge, and happiness in the presence of God, and the society of angels, and glorious spirits, to all eternity.

Every thing that you call yours, besides this spirit, is but like your cloathing; something that is only to be used for a while, and then to end, and die, and wear away, and to signify no more to you, than the cloathing and bodies of other people.

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But, my children, you are not only in this manner spirits, but you are fallen spirits, that began your life in a state of corruption and disorder, full of tempers and passions, that blind and darken the reason of your mind, and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only poor and perishing like your cloaths, but they are like infected cloaths, and fill you with all diseases and distempers, which oppress the soul with sickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us, with the one we see, and taste, and admire reason, purity, and holiness; with the other, we incline to pride, and vanity, and sensual delights.

This internal war we always feel within us more or less; and if you would know the one thing necessary to all the world, it is this; to preserve and perfect all that is rational, holy, and divine in our nature, and to mortify, remove and destroy all that vanity, pride, and sensuality, which springs from the corruption of our state.

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world and see what customs, and fashions, and pleasures, and troubles, and projects, and tempers, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus, as I have told you?

But do not you be affected at these things; the world is in a great dream, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkness, when we die ; but alas, we are most of us in the dark till then ; and the eyes of our souls only then begin to see, when our bodily eyes are closing.

You see then your state, my children ; you are to honour, improve, and perfect the spirit that is within you ; you are to prepare it for the kingdom of heaven, to nourish it with the love of God, and of virtue, to adorn it with good works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preserve it from the errors and vanities of the world ; to save it from the corruptions of the body, from those false delights, and sensual tempers, which the body tempts it with.

You are to nourish your spirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, fastings, and prayers, that you may taste, and relish, and desire that eternal state, which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to consider them as poor, perishing things, that are sickly and corrupt at present, and will soon drop into common dust. You are to watch over them as enemies, that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and so never follow their advice and counsel ; you are to consider them as the place and habitation of your souls, and so keep them pure, and clean, and decent ; you are to consider them as the servants and instruments of action, and so give them food, and rest, and raiment, that they may be strong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, useful and pious life.

Whilst you live thus you live like yourselves; and whenever you have less regard to your souls, or more regard to your bodies, than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your persons, than upon perfecting of your souls, you are much more beside yourselves, than he that had rather have a laced coat than an healthful body.

For this reason, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from every thing that might betray you into weakness and folly; or make you think any thing fine, but a fine mind; any thing happy, but the favour of God; or any thing desirable, but to do all the good you possibly can.

Instead of the vain, immodest entertainment of plays and operas, I have taught you to delight in visiting the sick and poor. What musick, and dancing, and diversions, are to many in the world, that prayers, and devotions, and psalms, are to you. Your hands have not been employed in plaiting the hair, and adorning your persons; but in making cloaths for the naked. You have not wasted your fortunes upon yourselves, but have added your labour to them, for to do more good to other people.

Instead of forced shapes, patched faces, genteel airs, and affected motions. I have taught you to conceal your bodies with modest garments, and let the world have nothing to view of you, but the plainness, and sincerity, and humility of all your behaviour.

You know, my children, the high perfection, and the great rewards of virginity; you know how

it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furnishes means and opportunities of high advancements in a divine life: therefore love, and esteem, and honour virginity; bless God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of christianity have, in the several ages of the church, renounced the cares and pleasures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of solitude, contemplation, and prayers.

But as every one has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be so many great blessings of a married state; so I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aspire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin state of life.

I desire nothing, I press nothing upon you, but to make the most of human life, and to aspire after perfection in whatever state of life you chuse.

Never therefore consider yourselves as persons that are to be seen, admired, and courted by men; but as poor sinners, that are to save yourselves from the vanities and follies of a miserable world, by humility, devotion, and self-denial. Learn to live for your own sake, and the service of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that which you can turn into a service to God, and a means of your future happiness.

Consider often, how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with every thing that can promote his glory.

Think upon the vanity and shortness of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds;

for these thoughts will strengthen and exalt your minds, and make you wise and judicious, and truly sensible of the littleness of all human things.

Think of the happiness of the prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the presence of God, and see themselves possessors of eternal glory. And then think how desirable a thing it is, to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you die you may have your lot amongst them.

Whether married, therefore, or unmarried, consider yourselves as mothers and sisters, as friends and relations to all that want your assistance; and never allow yourselves to be idle, whilst others are in want of any thing that your hands can make for them.

This useful, charitable, humble employment of yourselves, is what I recommend to you with great earnestness, as being a substantial part of a wise and pious life. And besides the good you will thereby do to other people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improved by it.

For, next to reading, meditation, and prayer, there is nothing that so secures our hearts from foolish passions, nothing that preserves so holy and wise a frame of mind, as some useful, humble employment of ourselves.

Never therefore consider your labour as an amusement, that is to get rid of your time, and so may be as trifling as you please; but consider it as something that is to be serviceable to yourselves and others, that is to serve some sober ends of life, to save and redeem

deem your time, and make it turn to your account, when the works of all people shall be tried by fire.

When you were little, I left you to little amusements, to please yourselves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God and yourselves, as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue, and exalted with the great doctrines of religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but despise every thing that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands suitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ yourselves for the same ends, and with the same spirit, as you watch and pray.

For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can possibly employ yourselves usefully to other people, how silly is it, how contrary to the wisdom of religion, to make that a mere amusement, which might as easily be made an exercise of the greatest charity?

What would you think of the wisdom of him, that should employ his time in distilling of waters, and making liquors which no body could use, merely to amuse himself with the variety of their colour and clearness, when, with less labour and expence, he might satisfy the wants of those who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wisely employed, as those that are amusing themselves with such tedious works as they neither need, nor hardly know how to use when they are finished; when with less labour and

expenſe, they might be doing as much good, as he that is cloathing the naked, or viſiting the ſick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the poor-eſt people, and let your hands be employed in making ſuch mean and ordinary things for them, as their neceſſities require. By thus making your labour a gift and ſervice to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy ſervice, and made as acceptable to God, as your devotions.

And as charity is the greateſt of all virtues, as it always was the chief temper of the greateſt ſaints; ſo nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the ſight of God, than this method of adding your labour to it.

The humility alſo of this employment will be as beneficial to you as the charity of it. It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own ſtate and diſtinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different ſpecies. By accuſtoming yourſelves to this labour and ſervice to the poor, as the representatives of Jeſus Chriſt, you will ſoon find your heart ſoftened into the greateſt meekneſs and lowlineſs towards them. You will reverence their eſtate and condition, think it an honour to ſerve them, and never be ſo pleaſed with yourſelf, as when you are moſt humbly employed in their ſervice.

This will make you true diſciples of our meek lord and maſter, who came into the world not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter; and though he was lord of all, and amongſt the creatures of his own making, yet was amongſt them as one that ſerveth.

Christianity has then had its most glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your spirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves beneath the lowest of all your fellow creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; and let ceremonious visits, and vain acquaintance, have as little of your time as you possibly can. Contract no foolish friendships, or vain fondnesses for particular persons; but love them most, that most turn your love towards God, and your compassion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the conversation of fine bred fops and beaux, and hate nothing more than the idle discourse, the flattery and compliment of that sort of men; for they are the shame of their own sex, and ought to be the abhorrence of yours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modesty, and a decent carriage, be all the state that you take upon you; and let tenderness, compassion, and good nature, be all the fine breeding that you shew in any place.

If evil speaking, scandal, or backbiting, be the conversation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourself; be as much grieved, as if you was amongst cursing and swearing, and retire as soon as you can.

Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, 'till you find a man that has those perfections, which you have been labouring after yourselves; who

is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

Love poverty, and reverence poor people; as for many reasons, so particularly for this, because our blessed Saviour was one of the number, and because you may make them all so many friends and advocates with God for you.

Visit and converse with them frequently; you will often find simplicity, innocence, patience, fortitude, and great piety, amongst them; and where they are not so, your good example may amend them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing any humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds; whether it be, as the scripture expresses it, in washing the saints feet, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you; or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill-manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues; and every thing that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise humility, and reject every thing in dress or carriage, or conversation, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do every thing that is praise-worthy, but do nothing in order to be praised; nor think of any reward for all your labours of love and virtue, 'till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For as

soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections; and is content they should excel in good works, provided that he can but make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as you would reject the most wicked imaginations; and think what a loss it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works devoured by the vanity of your own minds.

When therefore you have spent days and weeks well, do not suffer your hearts to contemplate any thing as your own, but give all the glory to the goodness of God, who has carried you through such rules of holy living, as you were not able to observe by your own strength; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficients in virtue, that can do great matters, but as poor beginners, that want the daily assistance of God to save you from the grossest sins.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wise man. Whilst his sickness would suffer him to talk with me, his discourse was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he saw the ruins which pride made in our sex; and therefore he conjured me with the tenderest expressions, to renounce the fashionable ways of educating daughters in pride and softness, in the care of their beauty and dress; and to bring you all

up in the plainest, simplest instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life.

He taught me an admirable rule of humility, which he practised all the days of his life; which was this; to let no morning pass, without thinking upon some frailty and infirmity of our own, that may put us to confusion, make us blush inwardly, and entertain a mean opinion of ourselves.

Think therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth; and let the double desire of your father, who is gone, and of me, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity, to do all the good that you can to all your fellow creatures, until God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters.

REFLECTION.

The spirit of this education speaks so plainly for itself, that, I hope, I need say nothing in its justification. If we could see it in life, as well as read of it in books, the world would soon find the happy effects of it.

THE END.

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